

NATIVE NEWS

One-woman play blends memories, music

Julie Cajune didn't think she was a playwright. The Salish educator and well-known spokesperson for the rights of Native people resisted the thought that she could write creative work. Until now.

Her one-woman show "Belief" opens at 7 p.m. Dec. 7 at the Bigfork Center for the Performing Arts. The show is a collaboration between Cajune, Salish poet Jennifer Finley-Greene and director Linda Grinde. All three have been involved in the K'K'usm Theatre Project in Arlee.

A musical ensemble of violinist Swil Kanim, world flautist Gary Stroutsos, and Grammy-nominated composer and pianist David Lanz have created an original musical score and will accompany Cajune's performance at the premiere in Bigfork.

The production is part poetry, part storytelling, and part memoir. The idea for the project came to Cajune after performing an impromptu telling of her mother's recollec-



Salish educator and activist Julie Cajune wrote and stars in a one-woman play, "Belief," which premieres in Bigfork. (Photo by Gary Stroutsos)

tions of growing up on the lower Flathead River during a flute concert that she had arranged for Stroutsos.

The audience loved the combination of music and story. People told Cajune that they wanted more, so she approached Grinde with

an idea "to put some pieces together to perform with music."

"As the project began to take shape," Grinde says, "Julie kept telling these wonderful stories. I would say 'write that one' and she would say 'I'm not a writer'."

But Grinde persisted and the stories started coming together.

"One day Julie looked at me and she said 'this is ceremony,' and I knew we had our show."

Grinde, a veteran actress and director, says "the poetry and stories in the show lead one to trust that there is greatness in the little mysteries of life. It is at once funny, touching, sad, and ultimately inspirational."

"I think it has great universal appeal and the music is amazing," she adds.

For more information contact the Arlee Community Development Corporation at 406-726-5550 or purchase tickets online at www.arleemontana.com.

New book highlights legacy of Crow Elder

The Woman Who Loved Mankind: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Crow Elder

By Lillian Bullshows Hogan, as told to Mardell Hogan Plainfeather and Barbara Loeb

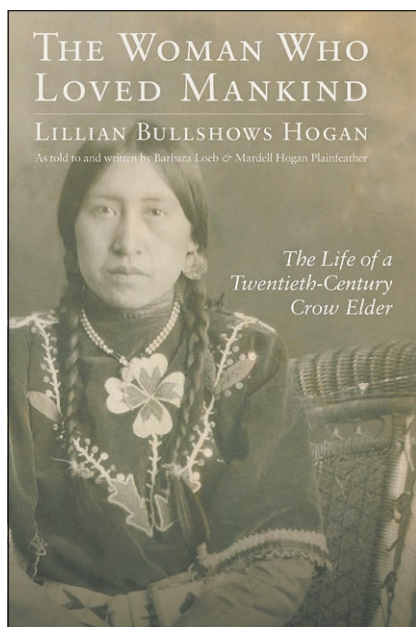
Published 2012 by the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE \$60 hardcover

The Woman Who Loved Mankind is the captivating chronicle of the life of 20th century Crow elder Lillian Bullshows Hogan, as told to her daughter and Crow oral historian, Mardell Hogan Plainfeather, and writer and scholar Barbara Loeb.

The oldest living Crow at the dawn of the 21st century, Hogan (1905–2003) grew up on the Crow reservation in rural Montana. In *The Woman Who Loved Mankind* she enthralls readers with her own long and remarkable life and the stories of her parents, who were part of the last generation of Crow born to nomadic ways.

As a child, Hogan had a miniature teepee, a fast horse, and a medicine necklace of green beads; she learned traditional arts and food gathering from her mother and experienced the bitterness of Indian boarding school.

She grew up to be a complex, hard-work-



ing Native woman who drove a car, maintained a bank account, and read the local English paper. She also spoke Crow as her first language, practiced beadwork, tanned hides, honored clan relatives in generous giveaways, and often visited the last of the old chiefs and berdaches with her family. She married in the traditional Crow way and was a proud member of the Tobacco and Sacred Pipe societies, but was also a devoted Christian who helped establish the Church of God on her reservation.

Warm, funny, heart-breaking, and filled with information on Crow life, Hogan's story was told to her daughter, and to Loeb, a scholar and longtime friend of the family who recorded her words, staying true to Hogan's expressive speaking rhythms with its echoes of traditional Crow storytelling.

"The stories are important because they help us remember what others have gone through and because those who came before us made us what we are today," says

Plainfeather. "We are Apsáalooke, and I don't want any of my descendants to forget the many chapters of our history."

Loeb adds, "I wanted to preserve Lillian's vivid voice, as well as her words. In truth, I wanted her to speak to readers from the page, but every time I put her beautiful stories into paragraphs, they became awkward and repetitive."

Loeb says she spent years searching for a

new approach and finally decided to break to the next line each time her subject paused. "As soon as I made that change, the stories regained their grace."

Here is an example – an excerpt from a story from Lillian's childhood in which an old lady is speaking to Lillian's mother:

"She's a kind little girl!" she says.

"She's kind to me – therefore, I'm going to give her a necklace, this green necklace."

Says "I have some [green beads] in my stomach" she says "and I keep them there.

They're my Medicine" she says,

"but you get her a string of green beads, and let her wear that, she grow to be a big, good woman" she said.

"The stories have been a joy and an education for me," Loeb continues, "and I hope readers will enjoy and learn from them, too."

She also hopes Hogan's stories help Crow Indians "step into the history one of their elders," scholars of Plains culture gain access to additional perspectives, and those new to Crow culture "be welcomed into a different world, where a woman might keep a medicine power in her stomach."

Loeb taught Native art history at Oregon State University. She is the author of *Felice Lucero-Giaccardo: A Contemporary Pueblo Painter* and numerous writings on Crow and Plateau Indian art and culture.

Plainfeather is retired as a supervisory park ranger with the National Park Service and as a Crow field director of the American Indian Tribal Histories Project at the Western Heritage Center in Billings.

For more information about this book, visit www.ywhc.org.



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ART 21 profiles installation at Cleveland Clinic

Photographer Catherine Opie describes her intentions behind the permanent installation, "Somewhere in the Middle" (2011), at Hillcrest Hospital, a branch of Cleveland Clinic, in Mayfield Heights, OH, during an episode of the PBS series, ART 21, titled "Change."

Created specifically for the hospital setting, the installation consists of 22 photographs taken from the shores of Lake Erie near Opie's hometown of Sandusky, OH. It is Opie's hope that the photographs provide a space for patients, doctors, visitors and hospital employees to experience an ethereal moment during what may be a difficult time in their lives.

For more on the program, which aired April 14, go to www.art21.org/artists/catherine-opie.

Killing the Murnion Dogs (from previous page)

Deep South: "... but I'm talking about America here –/ the rot-wood/ of The River Hotel in Cairo, shotgun shacks set back/ in the trees,/ or a street in south Memphis, blue neon/ hissing, rage of a cigarette, the warehouse door/ banging on its hinge."

The seasons, the animals, the drought and harshness of his birthplace are woven into the life that comes after, as in "Letter to Paul from Sunflower": ... this place is deep/ with ghosts. Do you remember that Sunday, driving Montana? Just the two of us, tall grass/ and sky? Brother, you are far away,/ and America is so suddenly old."

Novelist Luis Alberto Urrea suggests readers pick up the new book, "put down the window, and let the music blow back your hair. It's nothing but alive."

The author lives in north Iowa and teaches writing at Waldorf College. He's written a memoir, *The Mountain and the Fathers*, and a previous chapbook, *Ragged Point Road*, and his poems, essays and stories have appeared in several publications.

– Kristi Niemeyer